

# San Bernardino to Vote on Immigrant Plan



AP Photo: People protest against a proposed measure that would prohibit the city's landlords from renting to...

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By GILLIAN FLACCUS, Associated Press Writer

Tue May 16, 5:13 AM ET

SAN BERNARDINO, Calif. - A proposal that would impose sweeping restrictions on the ability of illegal immigrants to live and work in the city will be put before voters after the City Council refused to adopt it.

The proposal would prohibit landlords from renting to undocumented people, force day laborers to prove legal residency to work, ban taxpayer-funded day-labor centers, mandate that city business be in English and deny permits to businesses hiring illegal immigrants.

The City Council's 6-1 decision to send the measure to voters Monday was greeted with cheers from both supporters and opponents. Both sides promised major campaigns to sway voters in this city where nearly half of residents are Hispanic.

The measure had already qualified for a special election, and the council faced the decision of whether to adopt the initiative outright or let it go to voters. The election must be held in 90 to 135 days.

"I'm excited. I'm very happy. Now I've got to start building the infrastructure," said Joseph Turner, the proposal's author.

Councilman Rikke Van Johnson cited his upbringing in Alabama as he denounced the measure.

"In Alabama, you knew who the Klan were. They openly paraded around in sheets," Johnson said. "In California, racism has taken on a more covert approach. Here they wear suits, they have Web sites and they use initiatives to spread their message of hate."

Roberto Arreola, 30, an illegal immigrant from Mexico, addressed the council before the decision.

"We are not criminals and it doesn't make sense for the city to pass a law against us," said Arreola, speaking in Spanish with a translator.

San Bernardino, 70 miles east of Los Angeles, has a population of 200,000. Just under 50 percent are Hispanic, according to U.S. [Census Bureau](#) data.

At a press conference before the meeting, Mayor Patrick J. Morris said the measure would

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cost the city more than \$1 million in enforcement and lost business, and the election alone would cost \$300,000.

"This will burden our local taxpayers with unnecessary costs simply because Washington, D.C., has failed in its immigration policy. This makes no sense at all," the mayor said.

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